

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 SCEM-02 SCI-06 EB-11 ACDA-19

IO-14 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 NIC-01

DRC-01 OMB-01 AF-10 /172 W
----- 022396

R 171213Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4850

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

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USCINCEUR/EUCOM VAIHINGEN GER

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: FR, PFOR

SUBJECT: FRENCH MEDIA VIEWS OF EC NINE STANCE ON MIDDLE EAST

SUMMARY: SOME FRENCH PRESS OBSERVERS HAVE DEVELOPED SINGULARLY
ACID VIEW OF EUROPEAN POSITION ON MIDDLE EAST CRISIS AS DELINEATED
IN NOVEMBER 6 BRUSSELS STATEMENT BY EC NINE FOREIGN MINISTERS.

THEY PICTURE EUROPE AS NON-EXISTENT, POWERLESS TO INFLUENCE
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS, HOPELESSLY OUT OF MIDDLE EAST
DECISION-MAKING, PROBABLY SUBJECT TO FURTHER "BLACKMAIL"
SUCH AS THE ARAB OIL CUTBACK, AND INCREASINGLY VULNERABLE

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TO SOVIET INFLUENCE. THOUGH GOF SPOKESMEN, NOTABLY JOBERT
IN NOVEMBER 12 SPEECH, HAVE ALSO COMPLAINED OF EUROPE'S
BEING TREATED AS "NON-PERSON", SOME PRESS COMMENT SINGLES
OUT PRESENT AND PAST "GAULLIST" POLICY AS LARGELY TO BLAME.

WE BELIEVE THIS VIEW, THOUGH REFLECTING FEELINGS OF LARGE SECTOR OF FRENCH PUBLIC CRITICAL OF GOF COMPORTMENT IN MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, IS TOOSHALLOW TO EXERT SUFFICIENT PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENT TO PRODUCE BASIC POLICY CHANGE. END SUMMARY.

1. IN WEEKLY LE POINT, POLITICAL EDITOR GEORGES SUFFERT RECALLED EUROPEAN NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS ON MORNING AFTER EC NINE MINISTERS PUBLISHED DECLARATION ON MIDDLE EAST. "ONE PHRASE SPRANG FORTH", HE WROTE:"THE MUNICH OF OIL". BUT, HE DECLARED FURTHER ON, "TO SIGN A MUNICH-TYPE AGREEMENT, ONE MUST AT LEAST EXIST AS AN ENTITY. EUROPE CAN'T EVEN DO THIS, SINCE IT DOES NOT EXIST. WHAT IS SO STRIKING TODAY IS PRECISELY THIS NON-EXISTENCE." SUFFERT FELT "EVERYONE" IS TO BLAME--FROM BRITAIN FOR NOTWANTING TO LISTEN TO JEAN MONNET IN 1950, TO DE GAULLE WHO DERIDED "EUROPE", TO CONVINCED EUROPEANS "WHO HAVE NEVERSTOPPED SUSPECTING FRANCE". IN SHORT, HE WROTE, EUROPE IS "ONLY A SHADOW".

2. IN RIVAL EXPRESS, COLUMNIST JEAN-FRANCOIS REVEL ASSERTED THAT EUROPE'S "FIRST POLITICAL ACT IN COMMON" NOVEMBER 6 IN BRUSSELS WAS "AN ACT OF ABDICATION". HE ARGUED THAT GOAL SOUGHT BY SOVIET UNION SINCE 1945--TO EXTEND ITS INFLUENCE OVER WESTERN EUROPE WITHOUTPROVOKING WAR WITH U.S.---"HAS BEEN ACHIEVED VIA THE ARAB ROUTE AND WITH THE ECONOMIC WEAPON GIVEN THE SOVIETS BY THEIR ARAB ALLIANCE". MOSCOW, HE WROTE, HAS BROUGHT OFF A CONSIDERABLE VICTORY, AND "IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 4-10 73 WILL HISTORICALLY MARK THE BEGINNING OF WESTERN EUROPE'S NEUTRALIZATION AND OF THE END OF THE ATLANTIC PACT." SOVIET UNION, SAID REVEL, REMAINS MASTER OF THE TERRAIN, WITH FOREMOST MILITARY POWER IN THE WORLD, ITS FLEET IN MEDITERRANEAN AND SOON, THANKS TO PROBABLE EARLY OPENING OF CANAL, IN ENTIRE INDIAN OCEAN. TURNING BACK TO WHAT HE CALLED EUROPE'S "SUBMISSION", REVEL THOUGHT THAT, CONTRARY TO "JUSTIFICATIONS" MADE, EUROPEHAS DRAWN NO "MORAL CREDIT, NOR ANY PRESTIGE AS A MEDIATOR" FROM HER FALSE NEUTRALITY". CEASEFIRE COMPROMISE ACHIEVED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER, HE SAID, AND VISIBLE PROSPECT OF DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS, LIKE PRECEDING PHASES OF CONFLICT, LEFT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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EUROPE ASIDE, "AS IF IT DID NOT EXIST". IN SAME ISSUE OF EXPRESS PUBLISHER JEAN-JACQUES SERVAN-SCHREIBER CALLED BRUSSELS STATEMENT "CAPITULATION IN THE ENERGY WAR". THE "POOR NINE", HE SAID, HAVE SIGNALLED ARAB COUNTRIES THAT "INDUSTRIAL WORLD WILL HAVE TO ABIDE BY THEIR CONDITIONS." ADDED LE MONDE: "IT IS NOT TO BE FEARED THAT, IN GIVING WAY, OR SEEMING TO GIVE WAY, TO OIL SANCTIONS, EUROPE IS ENCOURAGING ARAB COUNTRIES TO USE THIS FORMIDABLEWEAPON WITH EVEN GREATER AUDACITY---AND MIGHT BE INCITING OTHER HOLDERS OF VITAL RESOURCES TO DO THE SAME?"

3. SOME OF THIS COMMENT APPEARED TO REFLECT THE PUBLIC VIEWS OF GOF OR PRO-GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN, AT LEAST WHERE EUROPE'S

CURRENT PROBLEMS ARE CONCERNED. LE MONDE OF NOVEMBER 15 CARRIED LONG ARTICLE BY FORMER GAULLIST MINISTER CHALANDON, IN WHICH, THOUGH SUBJECT IS EUROPEAN DEFENSE, ECHO CAN BE FOUND OF JOBERT COMPLAINT (IN NOVEMBER 12 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEECH) THAT EUROPE HAD BEEN TREATED AS A "NON-PERSON". CHALANDON SAID MIDDLE EAST WAR "UNDERLINED WHAT WE, ALAS, KNEW ONLY TOO WELL: THE POLITICAL NON-EXISTENCE OF WESTERN EUROPE IN TODAY'S WORLD, AN ITS IMPOTENCE NOT ONLY IN ACTING BEYOND ITS OWN BORDERS EVEN WHERE ITS VITAL INTERESTS ARE CONCERNED, BUT TO CONTROL ITS OWN DESTINY". IN AURORE SAME DAY, PHILIPPE BERNERT MUSED ON SAME THEME: "THE KISSINGER DIPLOMACY CURRENTLY BEING DEPLOYED FROM CAIRO TO PEKING IS A . . . NEW YALTA, EVEN MORE REALISTIC AND PRAGMATIC THAN THAT OF 1945. IN THIS FRIGHTFUL GAME, IN THIS NEW DEAL, THE SMALL AND MIDDLE-SIZED NATIONS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN 'NON-PERSONS', AS JOBERT SAID".

4. BUT IF PRESS AND GOVERNMENT SEEMED TO ECHO ONE ANOTHER ON SOME POINTS, OTHER COMMENTATORS (LIKE SUFFERT CITED ABOVE) HAVE PUT AT LEAST PARTIAL BLAME FOR EUROPE'S SITUATION ON GAULLIST POLICIES. RICHARD LISCIA IN COMBAT PULLED FEWEST PUNCHES ON THIS. EUROPE'S POSITION ON MIDDLE EAST EVENTS WAS NOT THE PRODUCT OF A SOVEREIGN WILL OPERATING WITHOUT OUTSIDE PRESSURE, HE CONTENDED, BUT CAME UNDER THREAT OF OIL EMBARGO. "WITH RARE IMAGINATION", HE IRONIZED, "THE EUROPEANS IN A BRUSSELS STATEMENT REFERRED TO ANOTHER DOCUMENT, RESOLUTION 242, OF THAT "OTHER BIG ABSENTEE" FROM INTERNATIONAL DECISION-MAKING, THE UN. "THOSE WHO TEN YEARS AGO WERE ALREADY ADVOCATING THE INITIATIVES MR. JOBERT IS PROPOSING TODAY, HAVE REASON TO BE INDIGNANT. EUROPE IS PAYING FOR FRANCE'S ERROR, FOR THE DELAYS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STUBBORNLY INTERPOSED BY DE GAULLE, FOR IRREPARABLE WASTE OF TIME, FOR WHICH EUROPE NOW APPEARS IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD AS A 'NON-PERSON', HUMILIATED AND BRUSHED ASIDE. . . . JOBERT CHOSE THE MOMENT OF THE FUNERAL MEDITATION BEFORE EUROPE'S LAST REMAINS TO DELIVER HIS MOST PRO-EUROPEAN SPEECH. . . . WHAT A PITY EUROPEAN POLITICAL INTEGRATION WAS NOT ACHIEVED EARLIER!"

5. COMMENT: THIS SAMPLE OF ADVERSE PRESS REACTION TO CURRENT GOF MIDDLE EAST STANCE PROBABLY REFLECTS OPINION OF AN IMPORTANT SEGMENT OF FRENCH PUBLIC WHICH CUTS ACROSS ALL PARTY LINES, EXCLUDING COMMUNISTS AND ULTRA GAULLISTS. THIS SEGMENT OF PUBLIC HAS BEEN SHOCKED BY WHAT IT REGARDS AS CONDESCENSION IN ASSURANCES BY SOME ARAB SPOKESMEN THAT FRANCE NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT ITS OIL SUPPLIES, AND HAS BEEN FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY WIDESPREAD TELEVISION COVERAGE OF DUTCH EFFORTS TO COPE WITH OIL SHORTAGES. RECENT POLLS SHOW THAT SOLID MAJORITY OF FRENCHMEN SAY THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO CUT BACK THEIR OWN CONSUMPTION OF OIL IF THE SACRIFICES WERE NEEDED TO HELP THEIR COMMON MARKET PARTNERS. EMBASSY'S GUESS, HOWEVER, IS THAT SENTIMENT, WHILE FAIRLY WIDESPREAD, IS PROBABLY NOT VERY DEEP. AS OF NOW, IN ANY CASE,

PRESSURE OF PUBLIC OPINION DOES NOT APPEAR STRONG EOUGH TO CAUSE
GOF TO MODIFY ITS MIDDLE EAST POLICIES IN ANY IMPORTANT WAY.
IRWIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 11 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, WAR, PETROLEUM, ARMISTICE, NAVAL FORCES, EMBARGOES, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: mcintyresh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PARIS29702
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731166/abqceglr.tel
Line Count: 168
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: mcintyresh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <16-Jul-2001 by boyleja>; APPROVED <23-Aug-2001 by mcintyresh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH MEDIA VIEWS OF EC NINE STANCE ON MIDDLE EAST
TAGS: PFOR, FR, XT, XG, XO, (JOBERT)
To: STATE INFO LONDON
BONN
ROME
COPENHAGEN
DUBLIN
BRUSSELS
LUXEMBOURG

THE HAGUE
USNATO
USEC BRUSSELS UNN
USCINCEUR EUROM VAIHINGEN GER
USIA

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005